The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Lakeridge Junior High School
951 South 400 West
Orem, Utah 84058

February 4-5, 2004

Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Lakeridge Junior High School
951 South 400 West
Orem, Utah 84058

February 4-5, 2004

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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Salt Lake City, Utah

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, February 4-5, 2004, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Lakeridge Junior High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Dr. James W. McCoy is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Lakeridge Junior High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Lakeridge Junior High School.

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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iii

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LAKERIDGE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Dr. James W. McCoy...Principal
Garrick Peterson.. Assistant Principal
Rick Robins.. Assistant Principal

Counseling

Tom Wiltbank ....Counselor
Anna Trevino ....Counselor
David Lund………………………………………………………………Counseling Intern

Support Staff

Cindy Anderson ....Registrar
Frank Cameron... Part-time Counselor
Linda Gardner .... Counseling Secretary

Faculty

Crispen Anderson... Health/PE Teacher
Kelly Anstead..Math Teacher (part-time)
Amber Arnold ....Orchestra Teacher (part-time)
Shane Barker... Math Teacher
Dee Batson ....Special Education Teacher
Bob Becker...Vocational Teacher (part-time)
Don Blackburn...Choral Teacher
Kevin Bragg...Social Studies Teacher
Dennis Butler .... Math Teacher
Valerie Chambers... Math Teacher
Andy Cox ....Resource Teacher
Craig Facer.. Science Teacher
Richard Glassford .... Science Teacher
Rachel Gonzalez ....Vocational Teacher
Sara Hacken ....Social Studies/English/GT Teacher

Larry Hill ....Band Teacher
Kara Holley..KCPE Teacher
Alec Hrynyshyn ....Science Teacher
Briawna Hugh ....Reading Teacher
Betty Lou Hunter ....Fine Arts Teacher
Marilyn Jenkins...English Teacher (part-time)
Tyler Johnson..PE Intern
Cathy Larson..English Teacher
Tricia Layne ....Social Studies Teacher
Mike May..Spanish Teacher
Thomas Meeks ....Vocational Teacher
Jeri Merkley ....ESL Teacher
Leslie Mohlman .... Math Teacher
Cindy Ness..Spanish Teacher
Alberto Oquendo...Drama/Spanish Teacher
Glenna Padfield..PE Teacher
Tiffany Pierce..Science Teacher
Karen Potter ....Social Studies Teacher
Glade Powell.. Math Teacher
Libby Robertson...Social Studies Teacher
Pamela Rock ....Vocational Teacher
George Rosenthal..Resource Teacher
Roger Schlappi...Resource Teacher
Karen Schlosser .... English Teacher
Glenda Schwab ....German Teacher
Kari Shirk.. Math Teacher
Kathy Smith ....Vocational Teacher
Julia Stanger..Vocational Teacher
Christine Tidwell ....French Intern
Patrick Trent..Media Specialist
Gerry Tuft ....Science Teacher
Colleen Walker .... English Teacher
Emily Welch .... PE Intern
Chris Wettstein...Fine Arts Teacher
Ruthann Wheeler .... Math Intern
Donell Willey..Social Studies Teacher
Marie Wride .... English Teacher

LAKERIDGE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Lakeridge Junior High School is to prepare students to be respectful, responsible, and productive citizens for today and tomorrow.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- We believe that education is a life-long process with the responsibility shared by the student, the parents/guardians, and the school staff.

- We believe that all students, parents, and school staff should demonstrate mutual respect and encourage high, consistent expectations in behavior, academics, and the use of instructional time.

- We believe that teachers should use a variety of effective teaching and assessment methods to meet the unique learning styles of all students.

- We believe in providing opportunities for extra-curricular activities that foster the development of productive citizens.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Steve Ramirez, Consultant, Life Long Learning and Associates, Visiting Team
    Chairperson

Roy Hoyt, Hurricane High School, Washington County School District

Vernita Hunt, Cottonwood Elementary School, Granite School District

Nancy Jadallah, Eisenhower Junior High School, Granite School District

Catherine Jensen, West Hills Middle School, Jordan School District

Dan Johnson, Mount Logan Middle School, Logan City School District

Mary Kay Kirkland, Box Elder School District

Gloria Merill, Murray High School, Murray School District

Andy Odoardi, Salt Lake City School District

Carolyn Schubach, Murray School District

Mont Widerburg, Alta High School, Jordan School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

LAKERIDGE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Lakeridge Junior High School is one of nine junior high schools in the Alpine School District. The school is located in Orem and has a student body of 1,153. The past few years have brought significant demographic changes to the community and student population. These demographic changes have added a growing segment of Hispanic students with the need for second language acquisition. The Lakeridge faculty has continued to adapt to meet the needs of all students and parents. The community council has been a key factor in shaping many of these changes.

In 2003-2004 the school changed to a block schedule to allow for a more diverse educational experience. Other recent changes include benchmarking curriculum standards within departments, abandonment of parent-teacher conferences for student-led conferences, and development and implementation of a schoolwide remediation program. Every effort has been made to focus the staff's attention on the learning of all of the students in the school community.

a)   *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The school is very much aware that demographic changes are occurring in its community, and that the changing student population will require changes in instructional delivery and assessment practices. The school has a growing number of Hispanic students who are monolingual Spanish-speakers. The faculty and staff realize that they need to investigate ways to deliver curricula to a growing number of second-language learners.

The data are showing a discrepancy between high student scores on the SAT 9 and lower scores on the Utah State CORE test. Although one is a norm-referenced test and the other is a criterion-referenced test, the situation raises a question for the teachers as to why this discrepancy exists. This inquiry has also led them to question the correlation between these test scores and teacher-assigned grades.

b)   *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

The school is in the process of gathering additional data such as grades in core classes to assist with the analysis of the discrepancy in test scores described above.

The school also needs to identify the students at risk in its general population. They know they have many second-language students who are in need of special assistance, but they still haven't identified the body of students in the rest of the student population who might need similar attention.

The data resource person is well aware that additional data is needed to support any hypothesis about student achievement scores and action plans to increase that achievement.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Continue to gather and disaggregate data to keep abreast of the demographic changes taking place within the school community

- Investigate instructional strategies to meet the specific needs of the growing population of non-English speaking students.

- Continue gathering additional data such as grades in core classes to assist with the analysis of the discrepancy in test scores, e.g., SAT9 and CRT.

- Identify the body of students in the general student population who might need similar attention in addition to those students with language acquisition needs.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a)   *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

One of the major observations of the Visiting Team was the community effort put into the self-study. Parents and students were involved in all stages of the self-study process. The parents were able to articulate the work and the assessed needs of the school as well as the teachers and administrators. The model of shared leadership that is in place allows the community to participate in the study of the school's strengths and weaknesses and to identify significant problems in the school. More importantly, the process allows them to participate in the solution as well. There is a strong sense that the community feels this is their school, and they have a major role to play in collaboration with administrators and staff members.

b)   *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The school has done a very effective job of implementing each component of the self-study process. The school and community were able to see surface strengths and weaknesses. The staff now needs to collectively study its own reflection for deeper understanding. There is more to learn from a collective reflection of the staff's initial work.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Lakeridge Junior High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1.   **Learning Skills:**
       Knowledge: Students will develop skills that enable them to acquire information and make connections between various subject areas. (Examples: passing classes, test scores, portfolios, etc.)

       Reasoning: Students will analyze problems, utilize pertinent information, and devise effective strategies to solve those problems. (Examples: problem-solving, decision-making, creative thinking, collaborative opportunities, etc.)

       Communication: Students will be exposed to a variety of types of communication, will learn to evaluate their effectiveness, and will continue to develop their ability to express themselves appropriately. (Examples: reading, writing, speaking, listening, dramatizing, sculpting, painting, singing, etc.)

2.   **Social Skills:**
       Students will recognize appropriate and inappropriate behaviors and will make choices that have a positive effect on the Lakeridge Community. (Examples: group work, social events, recognition of own talents, office referrals, counseling referrals, suspensions, etc.)

3.   **Citizenship Skills:**
       Students will learn to understand their roles as respectful and responsible citizens in their classrooms, their school, their homes, their community, their country, and their world; they will then be willing to accept responsibility for their choices. (Examples: participation in school activities, service, healthy lifestyles, etc.)

<u>**Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:**</u>

a)   *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The collaborative effort to build a shared vision for the school has included all major stakeholder groups. The committee included students, parents, and educators. All members were given an equal voice and were considered integral parts of the whole. The committee used the previous mission statement as a starting point for developing the new mission. A consensus-building process was established that included several opportunities for the large stakeholder groups to give input to the committee. Members of the committee took ideas to the student council, faculty, and community group for suggestions and revisions. The adoption process included several revisions and careful consideration of exact wording. The committee recognizes the importance of periodically revisiting the mission as the collaborative process on behalf of students continues to ensure the mission statement is filling its role in driving the decisions and efforts of the school.

b)   *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The belief statements reflect the work of the school to support student achievement and success. The statements indicate a commitment to providing students with the competencies that will help them become "respectful, responsible, and productive citizens." They also state the responsibility of the educators to provide "effective teaching and assessment methods to meet the unique learning styles of all students." Care should be taken to use the mission and beliefs as a guiding force in the work of the school in classroom, professional development, and enrichment activities. As the collaborative effort progresses and deeper understanding is gained, the school community may feel the need to revisit the beliefs to ensure they align with the mission and clearly state those commonly held principles necessary to support student achievement and success.

c)   *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning.

The next steps will include making the DRSLs part of the work of the classroom. The DRSLs can become the unifying force in instruction in every department, for every student. Staff members must come to a mutual understanding about what each of the DRSLs means and looks like in student achievement. This will be accomplished by developing a specific set of indicators of success for each

DRSL, along with the expected level of performance. This process will allow for a refinement of the DRSLs to promote implementation in every classroom.

Curriculum Development:

a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The Visiting Team commends the staff and administration of Lakeridge Junior High School for their ongoing work in aligning their curriculum to the Utah State Core Curriculum standards. The Visiting Team observed that most departments have worked collaboratively through this alignment process. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff continue to meet within departments and across content areas to upgrade and align their curricula. Some efforts have been made to vertically align curricula with high school standards, and teachers expressed a desire to extend that process to the elementary level. Aligning the content standards vertically, as well as horizontally, will provide a thoughtful progression of learning opportunities designed to support student achievement.

Several departments have started collaborating with others to integrate the curricula across content areas. For example, the same terminology is being used across several subjects to help foster meaningful connections of essential knowledge and skills for students. The Visiting Team applauds those departments that have made the leap from traditional/content/textbook-based teaching to teaching conceptually and encouraging others to do so.

The Visiting Team also commends the staff for its initiative in developing a comprehensive program to meet the needs of high-achieving students (i.e., those in honors, AP, and gifted courses). Progress has been made in meeting the needs of the growing ELL population with the addition of an ELL coordinator and ELL classes. The challenge for this staff will be to incorporate effective ELL and sheltered strategies into every content area. The staff is beginning to address the needs of at-risk learners through the Leopard Academy and the PLATO program. Through data collection, identification of at-risk students will necessitate additional staff development to foster a community to equity and the belief that all students can attain a high level of competency.

b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The desired results for student learning (DRSLs) have been identified; the staff has come to consensus on the importance of these outcomes, but has yet to outline explicitly how they will be taught in individual classes or across content areas.

The DRSLs are posted in every classroom. Now, the Visiting Team would highly recommend that the staff determine how to implement the DRSLs into their respective curricula and how to explicitly teach and assess them. Using the DRSLs as a framework for the curriculum will further the collaboration efforts among teachers.

Quality Instructional Design:

a)   *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

The staff has begun the work of aligning curricula to identify the essential knowledge and skills outlined in the Utah State Core.

Staff members are aware of "best practices" and have established a Best Practices Committee. The Visiting Team observed a variety of effective instructional strategies that engage the students in learning and address various learning styles. Efforts have been made to align instructional strategies and learning activities with most of the instructional goals. The Visiting Team encourages the staff to continue to gather data on current instructional strategies in all departments, so they can consistently review and align instructional practices with essential goals and performance standards for student leaning on an ongoing basis. The Visiting Team applauds the efforts of those teachers who understand and use a wide variety of instructional strategies, and would recommend that all teachers continue to explore best practices that will actively engage students in learning.

b)   *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

In the classes observed, teachers were using a variety of instructional practices and varied the strategies during a class period. Many resource students were in regular classes, with support from special education staff during and after the lesson in special study skills classes. Many staff members shared concerns about ELL student success, or lack thereof, in content areas. It is recommended that teachers be trained in SIOP/SDAIE sheltered English strategies to begin to address ELL student academic learning. Serious attention needs to be given to recognizing and meeting the range of different student learning styles. The Visiting Team suggests that the faculty collectively research and expand the use of multiple strategies and instructional delivery options to meet the variety of needs of all students through the use of differentiated instruction. As the staff members continue the study and implementation of best practices, they will more effectively address the needs of different learners.

c)   *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

The Leopard Academy is an after-school program for students identified as failing in a specific class. Remediation for a term course in math and English is provided through the PLATO program. For mathematics support, students are identified at the end of grade 6 to participate in a math tutorial class in addition to their regular math class in grade 7. Some teachers provide after-school tutoring. Plans are in place for a "remedial" bus so that students who stay after school for help from individual teachers can have transportation home. The Visiting Team observed that students receive additional assistance to improve their learning on an inconsistent basis. The scope of the opportunities to support student learning is primarily focused on remediation, with limited opportunities for ongoing intervention. The Visiting Team recommends that the school explore academic support opportunities through developing collaborative networks of support (teaming).

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The Visiting Team was impressed with the honesty of the staff in recognizing the need to develop a schoolwide assessment system for the DRSLs. Schoolwide performance assessments would provide important data to allow the school to measure its success in implementing the DRSLs.

The staff members need direction in how to articulate the DRSLs in their own classrooms and departments. Also, the staff needs to be trained in how to link instruction to the DRSLs. Staff members should identify specific, measurable indicators that will help facilitate continuous school improvement.

b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

There is limited evidence that the methods for assessing student learning are based on the type of learning to be assessed as identified by the DRSLs or State Core standards. There is some evidence of performance assessments being used in some curricular areas.

The faculty needs to give serious attention to recognizing and meeting the range of student learning styles that are encountered in every classroom. The Visiting Team suggests that the faculty research and expand the use of multiple and alternative assessment strategies in order to meet the needs of all students.

To bring clarity to the purpose of assessment, the Visiting Team would suggest the collection and study of student work. In addition, the departments should consider developing common assessment tools.

c)   *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

The report includes data from state and national tests. Staff members should begin to look at other data such as grade distribution (disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, income, and special education status) and common assessment for the DRSLs. Conversations in departments should focus on who is learning and who is not learning. These conversations may lead to the question, "Does the academic grade represent what a student knows and understands?"

While the Visiting Team was visiting with the assessment focus group, a concern was raised that all teachers do not have high expectations for **all** students. The Focus Group Report mentioned that only six percent of the parents feel that their students are motivated to do their best work.

The Visiting Team commends the assessment focus group for the quality of its perception regarding the schoolwide goals. The Visiting Team recommends a clearer integration of the goals of the assessment focus group with the goals of the Assessment Action Plan, and that the action plan be assessed regarding progress along the way and the ultimate impact of goal attainment on student learning.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a)   *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The leadership of the school has emphasized the need to focus its efforts on student learning. Administrators have taken major strides to shift the focus of the school from adult needs to student needs. The administration has structured a variety of opportunities for staff members to work, study, and reflect on their efficacy as individual teachers and a collective body of educators. The staff is encouraged by the leadership to seek new instructional and assessment practices that will meet the needs of the variety of learners in their student population.

b)   *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The school has a half-time data resource person. The staff has used this data to stimulate collective questions for the staff and community. The Visiting Team observed the staff questioning its own practice as a result of the data being presented. The Community Council was also involved in the examination of the data and the development of the action plan based on the data. The leadership is very effective at strategically articulating research-based practice so that the council is making informed decisions about how to allocate resources to

implement the school improvement plan. There is a strong sense that a continuous improvement model is in place and is enhanced by the self-study process.

c)   *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The school uses the data resource person to develop questions around state and national assessments. The staff is learning to use other forms of data to examine their impact on student learning. The school is in the initial stages of implementing an assessment system for its DRSLs. The Visiting Team was able to provide some guidance in moving in this direction through the department and focus group meetings. The administration is clear on the need to provide staff development and design time to build an assessment system that will include multiple measures for the DRSLs.

d)   *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The administration has strategically implemented a shared leadership model that includes all stakeholders. The depth of understanding on the part of the stakeholders was significant. Parents and students could discuss the health of the school organization as well as administration and staff. All elements of the school community, especially the students, felt that they were in a safe environment that focused efforts on student achievement.

e)   *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The Community Council has based its decisions regarding the allocation of resources on the school's mission, beliefs, and student achievement data. The council has a strong sense of commitment to seeing that resources are prioritized and expended in ways that will make the greatest impact on student learning, including the DRSLs.

f)   *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

One of the major strengths of the school was the shared leadership model. The balance of leadership committees ultimately funneled through the Community Council was very effective. All elements of the community were encouraged to participate in the process.

Community Building:

a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The Visiting Team saw evidence of "community" being fostered by Lakeridge Junior High School's students, staff, parents, and administration. The school creates and sustains a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging. It was observed that the school is willing to address the concerns of all the stakeholders and build positive relationships to enhance school improvement.

It was also noted that unifying the work of the Community Council and the USOE accreditation process helped to provide a clear focus and direction for the school. The Visiting Team noted the process of shared governance being used as a management model. It is important to note that this concept is supported through the allocation of school resources.

b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

There is significant evidence that the school engages parents and families as partners in the learning process. Communication between the students' homes and the school is regular, two-way, and meaningful. The school provides ongoing support through such programs as "student-led conferences," the School-Wide Assistance Team (SWAT), and the Leopard Academy. The Visiting Team found that the voice of parents was important in designing outreach programs for the school community. It was also noted that the work done in the Community Building Focus Group would have a positive impact on student learning.

There is a willingness on the part of staff members and administrators to collaborate, as evidenced by the creation of Collaboration Time. Staff and community members noted that this program facilitated meaningful schoolwide and community work.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

To a large degree, the school builds the capacity for improvement by its administrative support, supportive School Community Council and PTSA,

organizational structures, available resources, and its yearly focus on the school improvement plan. It is obvious to the Visiting Team that professional development is important to the administration, community, and staff.

Three committees exist to identify the students' needs and define the subsequent staff development needs. The School Improvement Committee, a subcommittee of the School Community Council, identifies the areas of student need from the data and creates the yearly school improvement plan that addresses these areas of need. The Professional Development Committee, another subcommittee, meets with the administration to designate the focus for the staff development. Additionally, there are monthly late-start days set aside for staff collaboration and/or professional development to address the needs of the school. The School Community Council has identified a "Best Practices Committee" as a need. The staff confirmed this need and stated its desire to improve by studying research-based best practices in instruction and assessment.

The school is on a productivity model that allows the teachers fifteen additional days beyond the nine U-PASS days. These days are built into their contract. This structure would allow for additional professional development opportunities, thus supporting the need for staff-wide professional development.

However, the Visiting Team felt that, while the structures exist for professional development opportunities, there is not a comprehensive plan for professional development for the entire staff. Departments often do the professional development. The professional development tends to be composed of one-shot presentations, and there appears to be little ongoing professional development. One suggestion is to have ongoing professional development and follow-up sessions to reinforce the strategies being taught. The reinforcement also helps to implement the strategies. The Visiting Team respectfully suggests that staff members review the standards for effective staff development from the National Staff Development Council. These may prove to be helpful in designing future professional development activities.

b)   *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The administration works hard to create a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement by providing the monthly late start and supporting the Professional Development and Associates Committees. The Associates Committee is a voluntary group that assigns monthly readings of relevant, professional books and then convenes to discuss the assigned book and its possible applications in the work setting. Additionally, the administration meets once a month for two hours prior to the late start day with the Faculty Council to discuss the late start agenda. They meet again for two hours after the late start to debrief.

The idea of continuous improvement is understood, but at the same time is somewhat new to this staff. With the productivity model, teachers work in isolation and there is little or no collaboration time in the daily schedule. The administration is modeling the collaborative process with the School Community Council, the Faculty Council, and the PTSA. There is a sincere attempt by the administration to collaborate with the staff and with community members using a collaborative/shared leadership approach.

As noted above in *a),* the school has many structures and practices in place that can support and encourage productive change and continuous improvement. However, because of the productivity model, there is very little time in the daily schedule for departmental or schoolwide collaboration. This may not be conducive to the development of a culture to the extent that it would in a conventional school where teachers have daily consultation times. Going to the A/B schedule has given the teachers more time in their schedules, but the effect of the change on collaboration is not obvious at this time.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

This section is not applicable to middle-level schools. Most of our public junior/middle schools are not accredited through NAAS, but only by the USOE–it is their choice to join NAAS or not.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a)   *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan encompasses the major recommendations of the committee, and the Visiting Team has confidence that the school and community will use the recommendations as a driving force to develop future school improvement plans.

b)   *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

The shared leadership model that has been effectively implemented includes all stakeholders in the decision-making process, and they were all a part of developing an action plan that aligned with the data from the self-study. It was clear to the Visiting Team that the Community Council is very aware of the plan

and is a major component of the implementation process. The Team is confident that the school will implement and study the impact of its action plan. The school is aware that there is a need to strategically abandon programs that data suggests do not have the impact that is looked for in the school improvement plan.

c)   *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

The Visiting Team is confident that the school understands they must add an evaluation of the *impact* of the action plan *on student learning*, and not just indicate that they have implemented the plan. Many schools have built action plans without building in the need to examine the plan's impact on student learning—therefore, these schools cannot strategically abandon those action plans that do not move them towards their intended goals.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the school for creating a school culture that focuses on student learning. The administration, teachers, and community have made the quality education of their children a top priority.

- The Visiting Team commends the administration, a committed staff, and the community for providing strong stewardship of a shared leadership model that has focused attention on student learning and begun the development of a learning community based upon collaboration.

- The Visiting Team commends the staff for addressing, in a very proactive effort, the changing demographics in the community. Hispanic students and parents shared their sense of the support from school community for including them in the educational process.

- The Visiting Team commends the entire school community for a very thorough and effective implementation of the accreditation process. The Team would encourage the staff to now use the self-study document as a source of staff development to continue its efforts to improve on behalf of student learning.

Recommendations:

- The school has identified, as one of its action plans, a plan to develop an assessment system for the desired results for student learning. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff consider the use of the DRSLs as an "umbrella" for study, and implement research-based best practices in instruction and assessment. This focus will also encompass the desire to integrate curricula reflected in the department reports.

- There seems to be a gap of understanding between the information reflected in the written summary of the departmental and focus group reports, and the work of the staff and community committees. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff continue to use the accreditation process for staff development purposes. As part of the continuous improvement process, the staff needs to study and reflect on its own self-study. This process needs to be revisited on a yearly basis to keep a focus on the systemic health of the organization.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff continue to examine its impact on student learning by using a variety of data sources, including state and national tests. The staff members have begun to examine the alignment of grades and core test scores that should help them ask additional questions to drive their work. The Visiting Team recommends they also consider the "examination of student work" as a rich source of additional data.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff build into the action plan an evaluation of the impact of the implemented plan. Presently, the plan evaluates the implementation of the plan, but not its impact on student learning and the school as a whole. This additional information will help the school determine whether to continue a particular improvement effort, or whether it should be strategically abandoned.

- The staff of Lakeridge Junior High School has made a valiant effort to attend to the changing demographics in the student population. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff continue its efforts to address the changing demographics to include the study of second language acquisition and strategies to teach complex content to ELL students who are ready for an advanced curriculum. Because of the school's focus on student learning, this would allow them to differentiate instruction for those students who are presently learning a second language but at the same time are very capable of complex thinking in their own language.